

Message Text

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TAGS: UNHRC, SHUM

SUBJECT: 34TH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: ISRAELI STATE-
MENT ON SOVIET AND SYRIAN JEWS

1. AT THE A.M. MEETING FEBRUARY 21, THE ISRAELI OBSERVER (BARROMI) DELIVERED A STATEMENT DEVOTED TO THE SITUATION OF JEWS IN THE USSR AND SYRIA. HE SPOKE UNDER AGENDA ITEM 11 DEALING WITH THE PROGRAM AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION. BARROMI'S STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTED THE PROBLEM OF EMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION, THE "ALARMING" RISE IN THE SOVIET ANTI-SEMITIC CAMPAIGN, AND THE TRAGIC FATE OF THE SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITY IN SYRIA.

2. THE STATEMENT OF COURSE PROVOKED RIGHTS OF REPLY FROM THE USSR AND SYRIA. WHEN THE ISRAELI OBSERVER ASKED FOR A RIGHT OF REPLY IN RETURN, THE DELEGATE OF SYRIA OBJECTED AND POINTED OUT THAT RULE 45 OF THE HRC RULES OF PROCEDURE STATED THAT THE CHAIRMAN MAY ACCORD THE RIGHT OF REPLY TO "MEMBERS" AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS EXCLUDING THE RIGHT OF REPLY FOR OBSERVERS.

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THE USSR SUPPORTED THIS INTERPRETATION. CHAIRMAN M'BAYE POINTED OUT THAT OTHER OBSERVER STATES AND NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN GRANTED THE RIGHT OF REPLY AS NO OBJECTIONS HAD BEEN HEARD FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, ALTHOUGH A STRICT INTERPRETATION OF RULE 45 WOULD LIMIT RIGHTS OF REPLY TO MEMBER STATES ONLY. M'BAYE THEN RULED IN FAVOR OF SYRIA AND

THE USSR AND BANGED THE GAVEL TO ADJOURN THE SESSION.
USDEL IMMEDIATELY INFORMED THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR
DISPLEASURE WITH THE RULING AND OUR INTENTION TO RAISE
THE ISSUE AT THE AFTERNOON SESSION.

3. THE ISSUE WAS SMOOTHLY PATCHED OVER AT THE P.M.
SESSION WHEN THE DELEGATE OF SENEGAL MADE A STATEMENT
SUGGESTING THAT SINCE THE COMMISSION HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY
LIBERAL IN GRANTING RIGHTS OF REPLY, THE DELEGATES OF
SYRIA AND USSR SHOULD WITHDRAW THEIR OBJECTIONS AND
ALLOW THE ISRAELI OBSERVER TO SPEAK. SYRIA AND THE USSR
BOTH THEN TOOK THE FLOOR TO WITHDRAW THEIR OBJECTIONS,
THE USSR PAPERING OVER ITS DIFFICULTIES BY STATING THAT
THIS SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS A PRECEDENT AND THE
SYRIAN POINTING OUT THAT SUCH LIBERAL INTERPRETATION
SHOULD BE ALSO EXTENDED TO RECOGNIZED NATIONAL LIBERATION
MOVEMENTS.

4. COMMENT: IN PREVIOUS YEARS, BOTH THE USSR AND SYRIA
HAVE RAISED OBJECTIONS TO STATEMENTS BY THE ISRAELI
OBSERVER BUT HAD NEVER BEFORE OBTAINED A FAVORABLE RULING
FROM THE CHAIRMAN TO SILENCE ISRAEL. WE BELIEVE THEIR
UNEXPECTED SUCCESS CAUGHT THEM OFF GUARD AND MADE THEM
AMENABLE TO COMPROMISE. THE PLO OBSERVER HAS EXERCISED
RIGHTS OF REPLY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ALREADY. THE SYRIAN
DELEGATE OBVIOUSLY DID NOT WISH HIS OWN PREJUDICES AGAINST
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ISRAEL TO LEAD TO A SILENCING OF THE PLO, AND THE USSR
PROBABLY FELT UNEASY ABOUT LEAVING ITS EASTERN GROUP
OBSERVERS VULNERABLE TO ATTACK WITHOUT BENEFIT OF RIGHT
OF REPLY. VANDEN HEUVEL

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